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ABSTRACT

This PreSET curriculum activity resource guide for parents provides ideas and suggestions for developing independence and responsibility in preschool children. The 36 skills for children which are included in the guide were selected by parents of 5-year-olds in Hawaii as those skills which were important for their children. The skills are grouped into six categories: personal care, eating, leisure and recreation, communication, responsibility, and independence. After the brief introduction in Section I, Section II offers tips for parents involved in teaching their preschoolers. Section III lists the 36 skills. Section IV provides a skills checklist and a community areas checklist for identifying (1) skills the child has mastered and those yet to be acquired, and (2) areas in the community where parents would like to take their child. Section V, the most extensive section, suggests activities parents can use for developing preschoolers' skills. (RH)

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Steps to Independence:
A Resource Guide for Parents of Young Children

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STEPS TO INDEPENDENCE:

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PARENTS

OF YOUNG CHILDREN

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I. INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Steps to Independence, the PreSET Curriculum activity resource guide for parents. This booklet has been put together to provide you with ideas and suggestions for developing independence and responsibility in your preschooler.

The 36 skills presented in this guide were identified through parent interviews, parent surveys, and observations of young children in community settings. These are the skills that parents of 5-year olds in Hawaii have selected as "important" for their children to know and be able to accomplish. The skills are grouped into six categories: personal care, eating, leisure/recreation, communication, responsibility, and independence. A Home/Community Skills Checklist is included to help you identify your child's strengths as well as those skills you would like him to learn in the coming year. It is important to keep in mind that these skills in this guide were identified by talking with parents of 5-year olds and observing 5-year old children in the community. These are skills that your child may already know how to do, may be learning to do now, or may not be ready to learn yet. Some skills may not be appropriate for your particular child. Our intention is to provide a listing of skills that many 5-year olds currently perform at home and in the community; you are the expert in deciding which skills you want to work on with your child.

The PreSET Model believes that all young children are playful, curious and competent learners. Each child is viewed as a unique individual, with his own pattern and timing of growth and development. Differing ability levels, maturation rates, and learning styles are expected and accepted. The activities in this guide are general in scope, and modifications may be necessary to meet the needs of individual children. As parents, you know best the specific needs of your children; you are the experts when it comes to planning activities and teaching skills in the home and community settings.

After completing the checklist and selecting the skills you'd most like to emphasize, please turn to the Activities Section of this guide to find suggestions and tips for teaching specific skills to your preschooler. These activities were reviewed by a panel of parents of young, special needs children. The panel's comments and suggestions were incorporated into the activities' design. These suggestions may also be useful for others who interact with your child: older brothers and sisters, grandparents, neighbors, aunts and uncles, friends and babysitters.

II. ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE: TIPS FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS

Parents must be involved

While it is up to your child ultimately to develop responsibility and independence, you have a very important role to play. For example: When he leaves the peanut butter jar sitting on the counter, it may be necessary to remind him that it needs to be put away. If you ignore this, or put it away yourself, you are giving him the message that it is O.K. to leave it out on the counter or table.

If you initially need to watch over and guide your child in order for a task to be completed, consider the time well spent. It may be boring and you know you could do it much faster alone, but the payoff is when your child gets into the habit of doing these activities on his own. You may be able to find a task for yourself in the same household area so that you give your child companionship and support.

Be positive, encouraging, firm AND kind.

This is not always easy, but it is well worth the effort. If a conflict should occur, remind your child that he is capable of the task (be positive), that it won't take nearly as long as he or she thinks (be encouraging), and that it should be done when you ask (be firm)! Do not insult him; you want the behavior to improve, but you don't want to hurt his feelings (be kind).

Set time limits.

On certain tasks, it may be helpful to use a kitchen timer and say, "You must work for only 5 minutes. Put as many belongings in their proper place as you can, but only for 5 minutes! Ready, set, GO!"

It is also helpful to know exactly how long a specific task takes. If your child routinely complains about doing a certain activity, use a timer to determine how long it actually takes and consider if that task is really appropriate for a preschooler to do.

Divide a task into small parts.

When a whole room is messy, it is hard to focus on one area in which to begin. You can help your child overcome this feeling that the task is overwhelming, by having him focus on a specific area or activity. (For example, put all the toys back onto the shelves or into the toy box first, then pick up

clothing; and finally straighten the bed). Choose a small area and direct the child to concentrate his efforts there. Give praise as each part of activity is completed. Consider how important it is that the entire room be done. You may want to start with only one task to teach (for example: putting toys back in the proper place) and add more responsibility gradually as your child is ready.

Remember that a young child may often need your help.

You may think that verbal directions are sufficient, but often we assume that a youngster will accomplish more than he is actually ready to handle. Your child may understand your directions but may not be able to organize the required steps to complete the job. However, if he asks to try a particular task, that may indicate a readiness and maturity to do it. However, make sure you consider safety factors before allowing your child to proceed. You can assist your child perform a task by helping him get started, and then withdrawing your assistance as he gets involved in the task.

Recognize your child's accomplishments.

You cannot praise him too much, if it is deserved. In addition to verbal awards, you might occasionally surprise your child with little treats, stickers, or spending extra time with you.

Use "Helps" to make <u>your</u> job easier.

Modifications can be made to help you teach your child certain skills, so that he can accomplish them on his own more easily. For example, zippers or velcro closures can replace buttons on clothing, elastic waist shorts or trousers can replace clothing needing snaps or zip closures. Using larger-sized clothing can facilitate your child's dressing himself (shirts, T-shirt). Adapted utensils and plates can make feeding easier for you and your child if he needs help with fine motor control.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF.

Recognize that you are a busy person with <u>many</u> responsibilities, as well as being a parent. Accept the fact that you may feel tired, frustrated and unenthusiastic about working with your child from time to time. You are the "expert" where your child is concerned and you are the best judge of your own resources of time and energy. Feeling guilty can drain you emotionally and doesn't benefit anyone. Set your own goals and accept your own limits; enjoy your child and have fun with him as he learns new skills.

III. LISTING OF PreSET HOME/COMMUNITY SKILLS

A. Personal Care

1. Dresses and undresses, except for fasteners (includes assembling clothes, dressing, returning clothes).
2. Brushes teeth using toothbrush and toothpaste.
3. Cares for hair (e.g., brushing, shampooing).
4. Takes bath or shower (includes using soap and washcloth, drying with towel).
5. Uses the toilet (includes pulling down pants, using toilet paper, flushing).
6. Uses public facilities to care for personal needs (e.g., water fountain, restrooms, beach shower).

B. Eating

1. Feeds self seated at the table.
2. Uses utensils, napkin, and straw appropriately.
3. Waits while food is being served.
4. Finishes within the allotted amount of time.
5. Eats appropriately in restaurants.
6. Participates in preparing meals (e.g., getting food stuffs and materials, making sandwiches).
7. Goes grocery shopping with parent (includes walking alongside cart, selecting items).

C. Leisure/Recreation

1. Plays alone with small toys (e.g., Legos, puzzles, dolls).
2. Uses a variety of quiet time activities (e.g., looking at books, watching TV, listening to radio, working on "school" activities, such as writing the alphabet, coloring).
3. Explores the environment when visitng a new place.
4. Plays games with siblings/friends (e.g., cards, ball, chase).
5. Participates in activities at the public library (e.g., story hour, filmstrip viewing, book selection).
6. Plays in the sand and water at the beach.
7. Uses the playground equipment at the park.

D. Communication

1. Expresses needs and wants.
2. Asks for help or permission.
3. Responds to simple directions.
4. Expresses feelings (e.g., hurt, tired, happy).
5. Talks with friends/siblings.
6. Listens and watches when parents are showing how to do something.

E. Responsibility

1. Cares for own belongings (e.g., returns toys, books, and clothes to proper location).
2. Cares for own room (e.g., straightening room, "making bed").
3. Cleans up after self (e.g., wiping up spills, throwing away rubbish).
4. Participates in kitchen chores (e.g., setting/clearing table, washing dishes).
5. Participates in housekeeping chores (e.g., vacuuming, doing laundry, washing car).
6. Rides appropriately in a vehicle (e.g., car, city bus, school bus).

F. Independence

1. Chooses an activity to play with.
2. Uses simple equipment (e.g., light switch, TV, radio, toaster).
3. Walks to a friend's or neighbor's house alone.
4. Maintains play for an extended period of time (1 to 1-1/2 hours).

IV. PreSET HOME/COMMUNITY SKILLS CHECKLIST

The purpose of the Home/Community Skills Checklist is to provide you with a way to identify those skills that your child has mastered and also to help you identify skills you'd like your child to learn to do in the coming year.

The design of the Checklist allows you to select and rank specific skills or behaviors you'd like your child to learn. The Checklist can also help you, as parents, identify skills you would like to target for inclusion in your preschooler's educational program.

Dear Parents:

This checklist includes activities that most children learn to do as they grow up. Information on what skills you would like to see developed will help to plan a more complete learning experience for your child. The checklist can be filled out by you alone, or with help from other family members. When you are finished, this information can be shared with your child's teacher in order to plan a more comprehensive program for your child.

Directions for Completing the Checklist

STEP 1 Place a checkmark (✓) in the column that describes your child's skills level NOW (does this without help, does this with help, cannot do this yet).

a. Does this without help: your child demonstrates this skill independently (needs no physical assistance from you).

b. Does this with help: your child demonstrates this skill if you provide physical and/or verbal assistance.

c. Cannot do this yet: your child is not allowed to do this, has had no opportunity yet to do this, or you have never observed him demonstrating this skill.

STEP 2 COMMENTS--Under COMMENTS you can write additional skills your child can do, describe problems you've had with the skill area, or experiences you've had in helping your child learn certain skills.

STEP 3 Pick five skills that you think are MOST important for your child to learn NOW. Place a "1" next to these skills in the column marked RATING.

STEP 4 Pick five skills that you would like your child to begin learning later this year. Place a "2" next to these skills in the column marked RATING.

STEP 5 COMMUNITY AREAS--check all community sites where you take your child now or where you would like to be able to take him. Blank spaces are provided for you to add community sites not listed on this form.

PreSET HOME/COMMUNITY SKILL CHECKLIST

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Rating	Skill	Does this without help	Does this With help	Cannot do this yet
	A. Personal care skills 1. Dresses and undresses, except for fasteners (includes assembling clothes, dressing, returning clothes).			
	2. Brushes teeth using toothbrush and toothpaste.			
	3. Cares for hair (e.g., brushing, shampooing).			
	4. Takes bath or shower (includes using soap and washcloth, drying with towel).			
	5. Uses the toilet (includes pulling down pants, using toilet paper, flushing).			
	6. Uses public facilities to care for personal needs (e.g., water fountain, restrooms, beach shower).			

Comments

	B. Independent eating skills 1. Feeds self seated at the table.			
	2. Uses utensils, napkin, and straw appropriately.			
	3. Waits while food is being served.			
	4. Finishes within the allotted amount of time.			
	5. Eats appropriately in restaurants.			
	6. Participates in preparing meals (e.g., getting food stuffs and materials, making sandwiches).			
	7. Goes grocery shopping with parent (includes walking alongside cart, selecting items).			

Comments

Rating	Skill	Does this without help	Does this with help	Cannot do this yet
	C. Leisure/recreation skills 1. Plays alone with small toys (e.g., Legos, puzzles, dolls).			
	2. Uses a variety of quiet time activities (e.g., looking at books, watching TV, listening to radio, working on "school" activities such as writing the alphabet, coloring).			
	3. Explores the environment when visiting a new place.			
	4. Plays games with siblings/friends (e.g., cards, ball, chase).			
	5. Participates in activities at the public library (e.g., story hour, filmstrip viewing, book selection).			
	6. Plays in the sand and water at the beach.			
	7. Uses the playground equipment at the park.			

Comments

	D. Communication skills 1. Expresses needs and wants.			
	2. Asks for help or permission.			
	3. Responds to simple directions.			
	4. Expresses feelings (e.g., hurt, tired, happy).			
	5. Talks with friends/siblings.			
	6. Listens and watches when parents are showing how to do something.			

Comments

Rating	Skill	Does this without help	Does this with help	Cannot do this yet
	E. Responsibility 1. Cares for own belongings (e.g., returns toys, books, and clothes to proper location).			
	2. Cares for own room (e.g., straightening room, "making bed").			
	3. Cleans up after self (e.g., wiping up spills, throwing away rubbish).			
	4. Participates in kitchen chores (e.g., setting/clearing table, washing dishes).			
	5. Participates in housekeeping chores (e.g., vacuuming, doing laundry, washing car).			
	6. Rides appropriately in a vehicle (e.g., car, city bus, school bus).			

Comments

	F. Independence 1. Chooses an activity to play with.			
	2. Uses simple equipment (e.g., light switch, TV, radio, toaster).			
	3. Walks to a friend's or neighbor's house alone.			
	4. Maintains play for an extended period of time (1 to 1-1/2 hours).			

Comments

COMMUNITY AREAS CHECKLIST

Directions: Check all that apply in each category. Feel free to add your own areas.

COMMUNITY AREA	Places we take our child now and feel comfortable	Places we take our child now, but would like to feel more comfortable	Places we don't take our child now, but would like to
zoo			
beach			
library			
drugstore			
shopping mall			
park/playground			
community center			
department store			
picnic area			
coffee shop			
swimming pool			
grocery store			
outdoor snack bar			
fastfood restaurants			
community day care (health club/bowling alley/church nursery)			

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COMMENTS:

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V. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The activities included in this section of Steps to Independence are grouped under six skill categories:

A. Personal Care
B. Eating
C. Leisure and Recreation
D. Communication
E. Responsibility
F. Independence

The purpose of this section is to provide suggestions and tips to you, the parent, as you work with your child in learning new skills. You are encouraged to view this section as an "idea bank," and to use your own expertise in modifying the activities to make them most meaningful and appropriate for you and your child.

A. Personal Care

A. PERSONAL CARE

1. Dresses and undresses, except for fasteners.

- If needed, use adaptive materials to help your child be independent in dressing/undressing. Use zippers or velcro closures instead of buttons; use shoes or sneakers with velcro flaps instead of tie laces.
- Use toys which help teach motor skills needed in dressing. Dolls such as "Dapper Dan" and "Dressy Betsy" have clothing which teaches buttoning, zipping, lacing and tying, and using a belt. These materials provide a fun way to practice skills.
- Help your child maneuver arms and legs to assist in dressing and undressing. When a garment is halfway on or off, encourage your child to complete the task on his own. Gradually reduce your assistance so the child can complete the job on his own.
- Name body parts and match with the article of clothing. Examples: "Your shirt goes over your head," "Your shoes go on your feet," "Your arms go into the sleeves."

2. Brushes teeth using toothbrush and toothpaste.

- Establish a routine for brushing teeth (after each meal, before bed, before coming to school) and keep to it as much as possible.
- Keep a small stool handy in the bathroom so reaching the sink and toothbrush and toothpaste is not a problem.
- Talk with your child about the importance of keeping his teeth clean. Teach him how to hold the brush properly and how to brush up and down to get teeth clean.
- Have a special place in the bathroom to keep his toothbrush.

3. Cares for hair (brushing, shampooing)

- Provide your child with his <u>own</u> comb and brush. Don't use other family members'. Start off with a brush with soft bristles.
- Show your child how to brush and comb properly. Let him practice using the mirror so he can see the results.
- Use a mild shampoo (no tears variety) to avoid soap in eyes and stinging. Let your child pour and rub in the shampoo himself.
- Let your child "practice" combing and brushing using a doll, or "shampooing" a doll's hair when taking a bath.

4. Takes bath or shower (uses soap and washcloth, dries with towel).

- Let your child "bathe" a doll. Provide a basin, washcloth, soap, and towel. Demonstrate how to wash the doll, naming body parts as you go along.
- Use materials to make bathing a fun activity for your child: bubble bath, water toys, bath sponges, soap that floats. Provide a special towel and washcloth just for your preschooler (cartoon characters, animal motif).
- Show your child how to rub the soap against the washcloth; then let him practice.
- Help your child learn how to use a towel. Young children may tend to wad the towel into a ball and just dab. Demonstrate how to use the full length of the towel to dry off.
- After bath time is over, demonstrate first and then have your child hang up towels and washcloths.

5. Uses the toilet (includes pulling down pants using toilet paper, flushing).

- The preschool years are a good time to teach independence in many personal hygiene skills: brushing teeth, wiping, flushing and washing hands after trips to the toilet. You can make a check sheet with stars or checks if your child needs help with these routine. Rewards can gradually be dropped once the habits become routine.

- When your child does have an accident, try to minimize the event. Let him change himself and remind him to put soiled clothes in the hamper.

6. Uses public facilities to care for personal needs (water fountain, restrooms, beach shower).

- Teach your child to recognize the international symbols for Men and Women in public restrooms. Even very young children can distinguish between a "man" and a "lady" figure.

- When you visit public places (library, restaurants, department stores, parks), show your child where facilities are and how to use them. Always accompany your child when he needs to use public facilities.

B. Eating

B. EATING

1 and 2. Feeds self seated at table; uses utensils, napkin and straw appropriately.

- Provide child-sized utensils for preschoolers. Regular size flatware is usually too large and unwieldy, and can result in spills. When serving foods that are large, cut them into bite-sized pieces for ease in picking up with a fork.
- Explain and demonstrate the uses of each utensil. When learning to use a knife, let your child practice using a plastic knife, cutting soft foods (banana) or spreading peanut butter or jelly.
- Children with motor impairments may need adapted utensils, cups and plates in order to feed themselves. Usinge these specialized items will help reduce frustration and build self-esteem for the child.
- Demonstrate the appropriate use of straws and napkins. Talk to your child about wiping face while eating and using napkins to prevent spills on clothing.

3 and 4. Waits while food is being served; finishes within the allotted amount of time.

- Often children either become impatient to eat, or after receiving their food, dawdle and are still eating when the rest of the family is done. A nutritious mid-afternoon snack can prevent a youngster's becoming too hungry and tantruming before the dinner meal is served. If your family meal is going to be very late, you might feed your pre-schooler early.
- For children who chronically dawdle or play with their food, using a timer to set limits may help parents reduce the amount of reminding or talking they have to do. When the bell rings, the food can be removed and the child excused from the table.
- Let children serve themselves or assist you in serving them. Selecting their own portions gives them some choice as to the amount of food they eat.

5. Eats appropriately in restaurants.

- Discover which part of "eating appropriately" is difficult. Is it waiting to be served, the actual eating, sitting, etc. For waiting: choose restaurant that serves quickly, such as fast-food restaurant, coffee-shop, etc. If the wait is still too long, have someone take your child for a short walk--spouse, friend, sibling, or you take your child for a short walk leaving someone else in restaurant.

- Choose times when the restaurant is not very busy. Early dinners (5:00 p.m.) may be more appropriate than the busy hours.

- If eating neatly is a problem, practice the day before at home, sharing with your child the plans for the next day.

- Order a small meal, perhaps dessert, so the time in the restaurant is not too long. Also, make sure it is something the child likes. Use home meals to teach children what is "good" and "nutritious."

- If child becomes too disruptive, take him outside for a few moments, if it continues after you're back inside, go to car with child while other person(s) finish their meal.

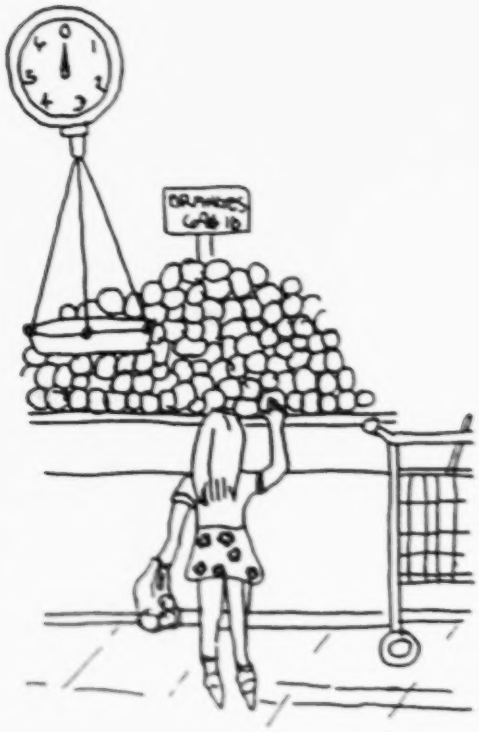
6. Participates in Preparing Meals

- Involve your child in preparing a favorite food. Let him help gather the ingredients, and follow the recipe. Encourage him to participate by mixing, stirring, pouring, etc. When the dish is served, let your child talk about his part in the preparation effort.

- Encourage your child to help in one particular phase of meal preparation (setting the table, putting out placemats, etc.). Participation in the meal preparation routine can help your child learn skills to function independently.

- Have a "special" apron or smock for your child to wear while helping with meal preparation. This will help his clothing stay clean and protects him from spills and drips.

- Keep a stepstool handy so he can reach the counter and participate with ease.



7. Goes grocery shopping with parent

- Initially, keep your shopping expeditions short--purchasing only a few items. Have a list of things needed and don't stroll casually up and down store aisles. Young children typically have a short attention span and may tire or become frustrated if the trip is too long.

- Plan a shopping trip to buy something you and your child will make together when you get home (jello, fruit salad ingredients, cookies, cupcakes, etc.). This activity can maintain your child's interest and give him something to look forward to after the trip.

- Plan your shopping in advance and make a list of items needed. If possible, let your child make choices about some of the items you will purchase (what kind of fruit, juice, etc.). Being able to choose will help him feel part of the trip.

- When buying multiple items, count them (cans, apples, etc.) with your child.

- Shopping with a hungry, tired preschooler can be frustrating for both of you. Try to plan your trip when your child is rested and fed.

C. Leisure/Recreation

C. Leisure/Recreation

1 and 2. Plays alone with small toys; uses a variety of quiet time activities.

- Provide toys for your child that he can play with by himself (puzzles, legos, dolls). Arrange for a place for your child to play uninterrupted (without interference from siblings or other children).

- For some children, playing alone is difficult. You can use a timer to encourage your child to play quietly by himself. Start with 5 minutes and work up to 15 minutes or so. When the bell rings, praise your child for playing quietly and then spend some time with him yourself. Playing alone can be developed gradually.

- Some children like to be by someone when they are playing. For example, have a drawer in the kitchen that has non breakable items that he can play with and encourage him to play with them on the kitchen floor while you are working.

3. Explores the environment when visiting a new place.

- New situations are often frightening to young children, and they may be reluctant to freely explore and play in these settings. When you take your child to a new place (preschool, day care center, babysitter, etc.), remember to remain close by while your child observes and adjusts to the new environment. Learning to separate from you will take time and practice. You can be supportive and encouraging by telling him when you will return and by following through on your promise.

- When you and your child go to a new place together (park, zoo, museum, aquarium, etc.) point out activities that are designed for him. Many museums have "Please Touch" exhibits specifically for children and petting zoos are often available in larger city zoos. Your modeling certain behaviors (touching exhibits, petting and feeding the animals) can encourage your child to try these new activities in a safe environment.

- Discuss with your child behaviors that are not allowed in certain environments. You may want to talk about what you expect and what's <u>not</u> to be done (e.g., no running, no wandering away without permission, etc.) when you are planning a trip to a new place.

4. Plays games with siblings/friends.

- Provide play materials that foster cooperative play such as:

  dress-up clothes
  wooden blocks
  board games
  "housekeeping" items (toy pots and pans, brooms, mops, dishes, etc.)
  wagons and balls
  toy telephone

- Plan activities that are fun to do with a friend: trips to the zoo, beach, park. Encourage your child to invite a friend along to share the fun.

- During play, encourage children to solve their own disputes by talking them out. Don't get involved unless there is physical activity where someone can get hurt.

- Initiating playing together may be difficult for young children. You may want to spend a few minutes getting them started "how about building a house together" and leave after they are involved.

5. Participates in activities at the public library. (story hour, films, book selection)

- Most public libraries have special programs (story hours, films, puppet shows) for preschool children. Watch your local newspaper for announcements of programs and discuss upcoming events with your child. Choose an activity that you can enjoy together.

- Trips to the library for story hours can help stimulate your child's interest in reading. Choosing a book to take home and read together can help instill an early interest in reading for pleasure.

- Some children's book shops hold story hours on Saturday mornings for preschoolers. Check the yellow pages of your telephone book for listings of these stores.

- Some bookstores/libraries also have newsletters or flyers they mail out which announce upcoming events for your children. Call and ask to be placed on their mailing lists so you can receive these announcements.

6. Plays in the sand and water at the beach.

   - Encouraging water play at home is a good way to prepare preschoolers for beach activities. Provide basins of water, plastic cups and containers, funnels and floating toys for your child to play with at home.

   - Provide sand toys (buckets, shovels, plastic cups, sand molds) to use at the beach. Build sandcastles with your child.

7. Uses playground equipment at the park.

   - Take frequent trips to your neighborhood park and instruct your child how to play on the various equipment (slides, swings, see-saw, merry-go-round) safely.

   - Give your preschooler opportunities to play on equipment with siblings and friends. If you have a backyard swing set, this would be a good way for your child to practice his play skills and to learn how to use playground equipment safely.

D. Communication

D. COMMUNICATION

1. Expresses needs and wants.

2. Asks for help or permission.

- If you can anticipate your child's needs and wants, be available so he can request things from you. Where appropriate, encourage him to talk about what he wants/needs rather than gesturing or pointing.

- "Forget" to give your child a needed item to complete a task. For instance, when he's coloring or painting, forget the crayons or paint brush so he needs to ask for them.

- You may want to establish some "Permission Rules" regarding using certain household items (the television set, stereo, etc.). Using these things requires your permission first. Similarly, your permission may be required before your child goes elsewhere to play (friend's house, neighborhood park, etc.).

- Encourage your child to ask for assistance ("Mommy, I need help please") rather than crying or becoming frustrated. Show him that requesting help appropriately is an effective use of language.

3. Responds to simple directions.

- Play the "Simon Says" game with your child. This helps to develop attending and listening skills and makes direction following fun.

- When you give directions to your child, make sure the request is something your child can accomplish. The focus here is on his following your directions, not teaching a new skill. For instance, if you ask him to go get his slippers, make sure he knows where they are and that they are accessible to him.

4. Expresses feelings (e.g., hurt, tired, happy, angry).

- Helping a preschooler learn to express feelings appropriately can be difficult for parents. Remember that you are a model for your child and he will likely "do what you do" in expressing feelings.

- Let your child know that it's O.K. to feel sad, angry, bad, etc., but that it's important to find ways to express these feelings without hurting others, such as talking to you about it, or sitting in a "quiet place" until he feels better.

- Offer alternative ways to release angry or mad feelings: a punching bag or pillow is a preferred object rather than a friend or sibling.

- When angry feelings/conflicts arise between friends or siblings, encourage children to "talk out" their feelings and come to their own resolution. You can set up a "Talking Corner" (two chairs facing each other) for settling disputes. Words are to be used, no touching. Don't intervene unless you see that they cannot settle the issue peaceably.

- Happy, joyful feelings should also be expressed. Hugs, smiles, and "I like you, I'm feeling so good, etc." are appropriate ways of telling others about positive feelings.

5. Talks with friends/sibling.

- Toy telephones are a good way for children to initiate and practice conversations with others. You can set up play situations to prompt calls. "Michelle, call Jessica and ask her to bring her baby and come over for lunch."

- Encourage your child to play with others in activities that require cooperative behavior (building a block city, playing store, playing house, playing school, etc.). Activities which require group effort (especially those involving role-playing) are effective in fostering conversation.

- Using dolls or puppets to role-play social situations is another way to prompt children to talk. This is a good way to encourage shy children to participate, as the attention can be focused on the doll or puppet and not directly on them.

6. Listens and watches when parents are showing how to do something.

- When you are showing your child how to do something new, timing is important for both of you. Select a time when he is rested and ready to learn (high motivation), not when he's tired or hungry. Also make sure you have allotted enough time to adequately show him, and that you are not in a hurry because of other activities that need your attention.

- When you are demonstrating a new activity, take your time and let him practice each step as you go along. Talk about what you are doing as you demonstrate, and explain why things are done in a certain order.

- Sometimes children lose interest in activities that seem too difficult for them. If this happens, put it away and try again later. A few weeks or months can make a big difference in a child's readiness level for learning.

E. Responsibility

E. RESPONSIBILITY

1. Cares for own belongings (e.g., returns toys, books, and clothes to proper location).

2. Cares for own room (e.g., straightening room, making bed).

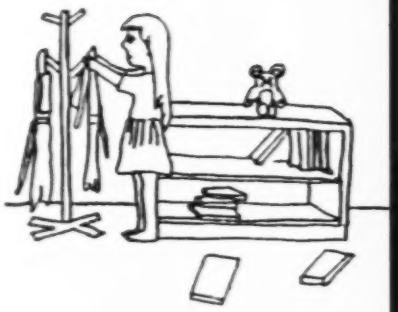
- Help your child understand that his bedroom is a special place to sleep and play, and that he can help keep his room neat and clean. Use a children's organizer system to keep track of daily chores on a monthly basis. Let your child check off the items he has finished.

- Make putting toys and clothes away simple. Provide low shelves or a chest for books, toys and games. Label dresser drawers with pictures of the items that go in each one so putting away clothing is easy. Provide a hamper or basket for soiled clothing and show your child where it is.

- Let your child help sort and put away socks, underwear and other clothes. Items can be counted and matched. Concepts of same/different and big/little can be learned as well as numbers and colors. Keep the task fun by making it into a learning game for your child.

- Show your child how to "make" his bed. It may be as simple as straightening the top sheet, folding a small blanket, and putting his stuffed toys on the pillow. The focus here should be on the process and not on the bed looking "perfect" when he's finished.

- When toys are taken out of your child's bedroom for play (to living room, family room, den), provide him with a basket or carton to use when cleaning up. When the basket is full, it can be taken back to his room and toys returned to their proper place.



3. Cleans up after self (e.g., wiping up spills, throwing away rubbish).

- Show your child how to wipe the table or floor if he spills milk or juice. Make sure sponges or paper towels are accessible so he can clean up after himself.
- Show your child where the rubbish receptable is in the kitchen so he can put trash in its proper place. Point out wastebaskets in other rooms (bathroom, family room, etc.) so he knows where to put rubbish.
- Have a wastebasket in your child's room for his own use. Encourage him to use it and show him where to empty it when it's full.

4. Participates in kitchen chores (e.g., setting/clearing table, washing dishes)

- Let your child help put away knives, forks and spoons when silverware is clean. First, check for clean hands, then set the silverware close to the drawer. Show where each piece fits, then allow your child to practice alone.
- Make placemats using contact paper cutouts in the shapes of the pieces to be put on the placemats. These may be placed on plastic or cardboard mats. Felt or fabric cutouts may also be used and glued to fabric mats. In this way, your child can learn to set the table by matching objects to their shapes.
- When clearing the table, your child can help ready dishes for washing by scraping food remains into the rubbish. Then he can help you load the dishwasher (show him where things go) or hand you dishes to be washed at the sink.

5. Participates in housekeeping chores (e.g., vacuuming, doing laundry, washing car).

- Cut out pictures of broom, mop, vacuum cleaner, dust pan, sponges, pails, brushes, etc., from catalogues or magazines. Let your child "find" these objects in your home and learn where they are kept and how they should be used.

- Let your child help you clean (child-sized toy brooms, dust pans, buckets and small sponges can encourage his participation). Cleaning is a good time to talk about the concepts of in, under, on top of, behind and beside, and a fun way to teach your child these position prepositions.

- When doing laundry, let your child sort his own clothes by color, and help you measure and pour in detergent. He can help you transfer wet clothes to the dryer, and sort and put away clean things.

- When washing the family car, provide a bucket and small sponge for your child. He can wash bumpers and hubcaps, and help rinse the car off with the hose.

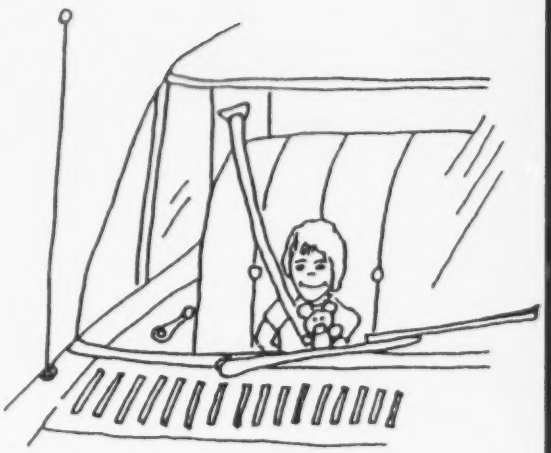
6. Rides appropriately in a vehicle (e.g., car, city bus, school bus).

- Develop family rules for riding in the family car such as wearing the seat belt, locking the doors, sitting quietly without disturbing or distracting the driver, keeping head and arms inside the car. After establishing the rules, occasionally review them when prior to riding in the car.

- If your child rides a bus to and from school, find out from the school administration or the bus driver what the conduct and safety rules are. Some school disticts have booklets for parents describing Transportation Services and Rules. Go over the requirements to make sure your child understands them and knows what to do when riding the school bus.

- When you are driving with your child, note stoplights and identify the meaning of the different colors. Point out the different shapes and colors of various road signs (STOP, YIELD, SLOW, railroad crossing, pedestrian crossing, school zone, no parking).

- Make a bean bag traffic light game. Using a large cardboard box, cut out three circles on one side and outline the circles in red, yellow, and green. Let your child toss bean bags into the circles. Assign values (red = 2, yellow = 4, green = 6) and add each player's scores.



F. Independence

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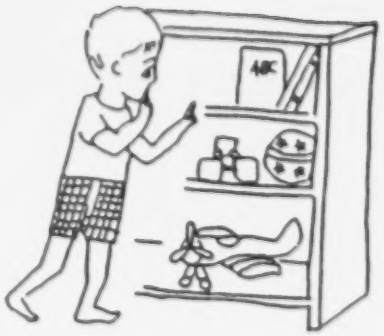
F. INDEPENDENCE

1. Chooses an activity to play with.

- You can begin to encourage decision-making by allowing your child to make everyday choices that are simple.
- When getting dressed you may ask "which pair of shorts do you want to wear this morning - the blue ones or green ones?"
- When your child is thirsty, let him choose which type of juice he would like (apple or grape).
- In play, let him select which activity he prefers (puzzles or playing with trucks).

The important focus is the emphasis on the child's ability to self-select without expecting you to decide for him. When you do offer or suggest alternatives, remember to provide only those options which are acceptable to you. It will be frustrating for your child to make a choice that he will not be allowed to carry out.



2. Uses simple equipment (e.g., light switch, TV, radio, toaster).

- Show your child how to operate simple equipment in your home. Emphasize safety rules and the practice of asking for help if needed.
- Some equipment may need to have "Permission Rules" before your child uses them (TV, stereo, radio). Emphasize the importance of turning things OFF when finished.

3. Walks to a friend's or neighbor's house alone.

- Within the limits of what you are comfortable with, let your child choose a place to play and get there on his own. You will want to establish rules about where he is allowed to go (only on your block, only to a next door neighbor's house, no crossing streets) and his asking your permission first. You may want to walk with him the first few times to make sure he knows the way there and back.

- Young children can get easily confused about locations even in their own neighborhood. Go for a walk with your child and talk about where things are:

  "The park is 3 houses away from our house."

  "Our house is on the corner."

  "The school is one block away."

  "Your friend Johnny's house is the blue one next door."

Encouraging your child to orient himself to the neighborhood can help prevent his getting lost. Teach him his address and phone number, so if he does get lost, he can tell someone where he lives and how to contact you.

4. Maintains play for an extended period of time (1 to 1 1/2 hours).

- Initially you may want to start with activities which you know your child enjoys and can do independently. Gradually lengthen the time he does these activities. The use of a timer may help keep track of the time spent.

- Provide a number of activities your child can do during the allotted time. For instance, if your child is to play quietly in his room, make sure there is a variety of toys or activities that he can use during the "quiet time." Remember to provide encouragement and praise after your child is finished. "I like the way you were playing so quietly in your room this afternoon."